

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2018

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

This report proposes Angus Council's draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The Scottish Government will use the Plans to assess progress towards the 5-year vision of rapid rehousing and assist Scottish Government in the allocation of resources for local authorities and their partners to reach their rapid rehousing transition.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) approves the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan attached at **Appendix A**.
- (ii) approves the ongoing review and development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, with annual updates in line with the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030:

- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment
- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. Four sets of recommendations were made in December 2017 and in February, May and June 2018. The context for the 70 detailed recommendations is a vision of a whole-system approach whereby prevention of homelessness is paramount and the responsibility lies not just with local authorities but with all parts of the public sector.

3.2 When homelessness occurs, rapid rehousing should be the default position, as that will avoid the need for time in temporary accommodation. Recognising that some people need more than just a house and have multiple complex needs that must be addressed alongside their homelessness, the action group has made it clear that the Housing First model of intensive support should be available.

3.3 For people who require the emergency safety net of temporary accommodation, their time there should be as short as possible. It should be spent in accommodation that is of a high standard and in a location that minimises disruption to their daily lives.

3.4 Rapid rehousing is about taking a housing-led approach for rehousing people who have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing means:

- a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
- time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better;
- when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.

3.5 And for people with multiple complex support needs beyond housing:

- Housing First is the first response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages;
- Housing First provides ordinary, settled housing as a first response for people with complex needs;
- it recognises a safe and secure home as the best base for recovery and offers personalised, open-ended, flexible support for people to end their experience of homelessness and address wider needs;
- the model separates the provision of housing and support, offers choice and control to tenants and works to the principles of harm reduction.

3.6 A rapid rehousing approach sees a shift away from a culture of 'tenancy readiness'. The majority of households experiencing homelessness have no, or low, support needs. Some households may have higher support requirements, and for them rapid rehousing means supporting people in their own settled home rather than in temporary or supported accommodation for prolonged periods of time. Where independent living within the community is not possible or preferable for whatever reason (safety, risk to self or others, choice) and for whom residential or supported accommodation is the preferred housing option, this should be small, highly specialist supported provision commissioned by the HSCP.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Although we have continued to see reductions in the numbers of homeless applications in Angus, there remain challenges in meeting the needs of homeless households, particularly demonstrated by long stays in temporary accommodation and difficulty meeting the duty to provide temporary accommodation in some cases. The average stay in temporary accommodation has increased from 73 days in 2016/17 to 132 days in 2017/18.

4.2 In 2017/18, of 741 homeless applications there were 557 homeless cases where Angus Council had a duty to find settled accommodation. The vast majority of homeless households in Angus are rehoused in local authority or RSL housing. Correspondingly less than 2% of homeless households in Angus were rehoused in the private rented sector. While the role of the private rented sector in providing a housing option in Angus has increased, homeless households experience barriers in accessing this sector.

4.3 Lets to homeless households represented around 81% of new annual homeless demand. Continuing this trend means there will continue to be an increasing demand on temporary accommodation until the throughput of homeless households into settled accommodation increases over and above the level of new demand, so that the backlog of need can also be addressed. If the ambition is to move to rapid rehousing and minimise time in temporary accommodation, then lets to homeless people across all sectors in Angus, including RSL and the private rented sector, will need to increase. However an increased focus on prevention will help to manage demand and reduce the level of lets required.

4.4 82% of temporary accommodation in Angus is provided by the local authority in mainstream, furnished properties based within the community and spread across the main towns in Angus. There is no hostel type accommodation in Angus. The number of homeless presentations of people with multiple complex needs has increased and, despite the demand for temporary accommodation, there has been an increase in voids in our supported homeless accommodation at North Grimsby.

4.4 Aiming to reduce the requirement for temporary accommodation, our allocations policy is being reviewed to give outright priority for care leavers and households being discharged from the armed forces, hospital or other institutions. It is envisaged that suitable permanent housing will be identified for these groups prior to discharge, preventing homelessness and

the need for temporary accommodation. We are also changing the criteria for bedroom sizes and giving single households and couples that would currently qualify for one bedroom, the opportunity to bid on properties with 2 bedrooms. This is envisaged to open up the available stock for smaller households and reduce waiting times and time spent in temporary accommodation. We are working to implement the revised allocations policy in early 2019.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Drawing on baseline information and projected five year projections Angus Council's draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20-2023/24 (**Appendix A**) details how we will achieve our goal that people who experience homelessness reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible by:
- increasing focus on prevention to stop homelessness happening in the first place;
 - ensuring households get through the homeless system faster;
 - ensuring homeless households can access existing housing;
 - ensuring homeless households can access the right type of support at the right time;
 - increasing affordable housing supply to meet needs of homeless households.
- 5.2 The actions identified within the transition plan have been collated and detailed in **Appendix 1**, Rapid Rehousing Transition Action Plan.
- 5.4 Once approved by the Scottish Government, the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will be subject to ongoing review, with annual updates in line with the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This transition to rapid rehousing will be achieved partly within existing resources. We will work with our partners to maximise mainstream housing and streamline joint commissioning, while expensive forms of temporary accommodation are minimised.
- 6.2 The Scottish Government announced on 27 June 2018 that £21 million will be made available from the £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund to support the transition to rapid rehousing and Housing First. In addition, consideration is being given to funding being made available to all local authorities to help with the development of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. The mechanism for drawing down new resources is currently being determined by the Scottish Government. Resources required for additional housing supply will continue to be channelled through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with elected members, partner organisations and tenant representatives via locality briefings and interaction with the identified project board.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix A – Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Appendix 1 – Rapid Rehousing Transition Action Plan